



County Administrative Office Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

May 24, 2016

The Honorable Jay Obernolte
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2341 (Obernolte)** – As Amended May 19, 2016 – **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblyman Obernolte:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support AB 2341, legislation that would allow for up to five vacant judgeships to be reallocated to superior courts with fewer authorized judgeships than their assessed judicial need.

California's state court system, the largest in the nation, serves 38 million people. The state's fastest growing counties, including San Bernardino County, are facing a critical shortage of judges to hear the cases of our most vulnerable citizens. In 2007, the Legislature authorized 50 new trial court judges. However, the positions remain unfunded and unfilled. San Bernardino County Superior Court is one of the most underfunded, under judged and staffed courts in the state, which handles some of the highest caseloads statewide. On December 13, 2012, the California Judicial Council voted to approve the 2012 Judicial Needs Assessment which determined the County of San Bernardino needed 156 judges to meet the community's needs. Unfortunately, to date, only 67 of those judges are funded.

Governor Brown has been reluctant to fund new judgeships until action is taken to distribute judge positions based on workload needs. In his veto message for SB 229 (Roth 2015), which would have appropriated \$5 million from the General Fund to fund 12 of the second set of 50 authorized judgeships, he stated a desire to "work with the Judicial Council to develop a more system-wide approach to balance the workload and the distribution of judgeships around the state" before funding any new positions.

AB 2341 would provide for a more equitable distribution of judgeships by giving the Judicial Council the authority to develop a mechanism that reallocates up to five vacant judgeships from superior courts with more authorized judicial positions (AJP) than their assessed judicial need to superior courts with fewer AJPs such as San Bernardino County Superior Court.

For these reasons, the County of San Bernardino is pleased to support AB 2341 and thanks you for championing this effort. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,

JAMES RAMOS
Board of Supervisors Chairman
Third District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

c: San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation

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